



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Jacksonville District

News Release

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P.O. Box 4970 Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

Nanciann Regalado, Corporate Communication
Phone: 904-232-2236
FAX: 904-232-2237

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Destin beach renourishment project halted by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers after third “turtle take”

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Dredging on the Walton County/City of Destin Beach Nourishment Project was halted May 7 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District. The Corps required the contractor, Great Lakes Dredge and Dock Co., to suspend work after a Kemps Ridley sea turtle, an endangered species, was accidentally killed during the dredging process.

The turtle was killed during the operation of the hopper dredge Liberty Island. Warmer water temperatures this winter have supported a higher number of turtles than would usually be encountered in the waters off the Florida panhandle in recent months. Forty-six sea turtles and one sturgeon have been captured and relocated by the trawler working with the dredge during the dredging process. With this recent take, the total number of turtles killed on this project is three. As a result, the Jacksonville District has suspended the dredging project until Oct. 1, 2006 or when additional Kemp's takes become available, as dictated by a biological opinion issued to the Corps by the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

The Corps works diligently to prevent turtle ‘takes’ and in the 1990s introduced the first deflector device to move sea turtles out of harm’s way. The Corps also initiated

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consultation with the NMFS, which resulted in the Gulf of Mexico Regional Biological Opinion. The opinion allots turtle takes in the Gulf of Mexico for the four Corps of Engineers' districts in this region.

For further information, please call the Jacksonville District Corporate Communication Office at 904-334-8954.

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